

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3376

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 3895

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: POLITICAL PARTIES REACT TO AFM PLAN

REF: LISBON 3875

SUMMARY: PARTY REACTION TO AFM PLAN FOR DIRECT LINKS WITH
PEOPLE HAS SPLIT ALONG PREDICTABLE LINES. MODERATES ARE CRITICAL;
BOTH COMMUNISTS AND FAR LEFT SUPPORT PLAN. ARMED FORCES
GENERAL STAFF OFFICER, WHO WAS PRESENT DURING AFM ASSEMBLY
DEBATE, HAS DESCRIBED PLAN TO DAO AS "VICTORY FOR COMMUNISTS."
MODERATES ARE WELL AWARE OF IMPLICATIONS OF PLAN, WHICH VIRTUALLY
WRITES THEM OUT OF REVOLUTIONARY SCENARIO. THEY ARE
LIKELY TO ADOPT WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE UNLESS OTHER EVENTS
E.G. FLARE UP IN REPUBLICA CASE, SHOULD FORCE CONFRONTATION
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WITH AFM. END SUMMARY

1. POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE SPLIT ALONG PREDICTABLE LINES IN THEIR RESPONSES TO AFM PLAN FOR DIRECT LINKS WITH PEOPLE.

-- MODERATES: SOCIALISTS HAVE NOT YET RESPONDED PUBLICLY. OUR PS SOURCES HOWEVER ARE HIGHLY CRITICAL OF PLAN. PPD HAS ISSUED CAREFULLY WORDED CRITIQUE OF PLAN POINTING OUT THAT:

(1) PLAN IS USURPATION OF ROLE OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY UNDER TERMS OF PACT BETWEEN AFM AND PARTIES; (2) EFFORT TO CREATE REDUNDANT PARALLEL STRUCTURE IS NEEDLESS DIVERSION OF ENERGIES FROM URGENT SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS FACING NATION; (3) SERIES OF POPULAR ASSEMBLIES EACH SELECTING DELEGATES TO HIGHER-LEVEL ASSEMBLY IS PERPETUATION OF BASICALLY UNDEMOCRATIC PROCEDURE MADE WORSE BY SUBSTITUTION OF "SHOW OF HANDS" FOR SECRET BALLOT; (4) PLAN EFFECTIVELY PUSHES PARTIES ASIDE.

-- COMMUNISTS: PCP POLITICAL COMMITTEE HAS PRAISED PLAN. STATEMENT ISSUED JULY 9 UNDERSCORED: (1) NEED TO RESPECT STRICTLY UNITARY CHARACTER OF POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS; AND (2) NEED (FOR PARTIES) TO ABANDON SECTARIAN POSITIONS AND ESTABLISH COOPERATIVE RELATIONS AT WORKING LEVEL.

-- FAR LEFT: IN RARE DISPLAY OF UNITY, MES, PRT, PRP-BR, AND NATIONAL SECRETARIAT OF REVOLUTIONARY COUNCILS OF WORKERS, SOLDIERS AND SAILORS (CRT) HAVE JOINED IN CHORUS OF PRAISE FOR PLAN.

2. OFFICER ON ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF WHO WAS PRESENT DURING AFM ASSEMBLY DEBATE HAS CLASSIFIED AFM ENDORSEMENT OF PLAN AS "VICTORY FOR COMMUNISTS." SOURCE TOLD DAO JULY 9 THAT INITIAL STEP IN IMPLEMENTING PLAN WOULD BE PILOT PROJECT IN SETUBAL, WHICH IS MORE BAD NEWS SINCE COMMUNISTS ARE ALREADY WELL ORGANIZED AT LOCAL LEVEL THERE. PRIME MINISTER VASCO GONCALVES PUSHED UNSUCCESSFULLY DURING MEETING FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF CENSORSHIP PROGRAM. SOURCE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT ABSENCE OF MELO ANTUNES DURING ASSEMBLY DEBATE HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH ANGOLA BUT RATHER REFLECTED MELO ANTUNES' DESIRE TO "WAIT IT OUT."

3. COMMENT: AS PPD STATEMENT INDICATES, PLAN IS ANATHAMA TO MODERATES. IT SIMPLY WRITES PARTIES OUT OF REVOLUTIONARY SCENARIO. MODERATES ARE WELL AWARE OF IMPLICATIONS. OUR CONFIDENTIAL

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ESTIMATE IS THAT THEY WILL NOT FORCE SHOWDOWN ON ISSUE BUT WILL ADOPT WAIT-AND-SEE ATTITUDE. THIS COULD CHANGE, HOWEVER, IF OTHER EVENTS, E.G. REPUBLICA CASE, TAKE TURN WHICH FORCE SOCIALISTS TO ACT. COMMUNISTS AND FAR LEFT OBVIOUSLY WOULD HAVE PREFERRED AN OUTRIGHT ENDORSEMENT OF THEIR PREFERRED PROGRAM (CDR'S FOR COMMUNISTS; CRT'S FOR FAR LEFT). BUT AS THEIR REACTIONS SUGGEST, BOTH ARE PREPARED TO WORK WITH AFM PLAN TO SHAPE IT TO THEIR PURPOSES.

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